DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 043 844 AC 008 692

TITLE	Standards for the Use of the Laboratory Method.
INSTITUTION	National Training Labs. Inst. for Applied Behavioral Science, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Oct 69
NOTE	18p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.00
DESCRIPTORS	Consultants, *Ethics, *Laboratory Training, *Professional Associations, Selection, *Standards, Trainees, Trainers, Values
IDENTIFIERS	National Training Laboratory Institute

ABSTRACT

The increased popularity of laboratory training and the relevance of laboratory method to the solution of human relationship problems has increased the need for people who can use the method and for setting high standards and efficient techniques. This document is devoted to the statement of the National Training Laboratory (NTL) Institute standards for its programs and members. It discusses: the purpose and values of the NTL Institute, program standards, selection of trainees, standards for trainers and consultants, and guidelines for evaluating competence. (PT)

ED043844

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

AC 004 492

STANDARDS FOR THE USE OF LABORATORY METHOD

In NTL Institute Programs

October 1969

ED 043844

The educational method widely known as sensitivity training was introduced in the late 1940s by a group of social scientists who were seeking ways to translate theory and knowledge about human social behavior into more effective individual and group action. These scientists and their associates, for the most part leaders in adult education, systematically observed and reacted to their own behaviors, primarily in small face-to-face groups called training groups, or T Groups. The process came to be called "laboratory method."

In the laboratory method, individuals learn from studying their own behavior and the interaction of members of the group. This includes time spent in the following activities:

1. Members of the group behave and interact in relation to a task or in the development of a more effective group.
2. Data produced by that interaction, including feelings, and reactions of members, are analyzed and related to theory.
3. Members of the group are encouraged to experiment with new kinds of behavior, including taking a variety of different roles.
4. Consideration is given to the relationship of events in the group to the members' everyday life settings.

NTL INSTITUTE BEGAN under the auspices of the National Education Association Adult Education Service. Originally named the National Training Laboratory in Group Development, it became National Training Laboratories, a separate division of NEA, in 1962. In 1967 it became an independent, nonprofit corporation associated with the NEA.

The behavioral scientists working to develop laboratory method and to apply the emerging theories and techniques in the world of social action organized the NTL Institute in 1947 as the focal agency of their work. The group of scientists, most of them in positions at universities across the country, became known as the "NTL Network."

Today, NTL Institute is one of many organizations providing services based on laboratory method, and elected members of the Institute network now represent only a fraction of those offering to perform these services. Programs based on laboratory method are found in a variety of forms and contexts and under several names. "Sensitivity training" has become the most commonly used generic term for the method.

The rising popularity of laboratory training and the apparent relevance of laboratory method to the solution

of human relationship problems in a wide range of social contexts has greatly increased the demand for individuals who can apply the method. In turn, that demand has increased the need for guidelines to protect both prospective clients and the developing profession of applied behavioral science. NTL Institute has therefore undertaken to formulate this statement of standards for its programs and its members.

The Institute believes that the standards presented here are applicable to any program or service based on laboratory method and to any person conducting such a program. However, because the NTL Institute network embraces a wide range of personal styles and interests in a developing field, new questions related to standards continually arise. An annual review of this statement is anticipated.

NTL INSTITUTE PROGRAMS are conducted by persons who meet the requirements for professional membership in the organization. (Section V describes the qualifications of NTL Institute trainers and consultants. Specific requirements for Institute membership are listed in the organization's by-laws, available on request.) Elected professional members who regularly serve in Institute programs, that is, who comprise the active Institute faculty, are designated Associates *of NTL Institute. Associates and others who have distinguished themselves in the field of applied behavioral science are elected by a committee of Associates as* Fellows *of NTL Institute.*

I. PURPOSE

The overriding purpose of NTL Institute is constructive societal change. Its programs focus on the development of individual and organizational dynamics to help create organizations that continually promote both personal and social growth. The Institute conducts programs of training, consultation, research, and dissemination. The consultation and training programs, to which these standards are addressed, have the following aims:

- To help individuals acquire the experience, knowledge, and skills to increase their creativity in relationships with others.
- To help leaders in all walks of life enhance their ability to lead others toward greater individual and social improvement.
- To help organizations diagnose human issues and build structures and processes that satisfy both organizational and individual needs.
- To help individuals and organizations understand and cope with forces of change and initiate desirable social change using democratic methods.

II. VALUES

NTL Institute places high value on the following:

- **The utilization of scientific method and the application of behavioral science knowledge to social problems.**
- **The individual's dignity, his potential for creative living, and his right of choice.**
- **Authenticity in relationships, openness of communication, wide participation in group affairs, development of interpersonal competence, confrontation of issues leading to effective problem solving, and democratic decision making.**

III. PROGRAM STANDARDS

1. The Institute believes that "laboratory training must operate on the basis of a system of values which emphasizes inquiry, not ideology" and that the appropriate aim of laboratory training is "to enhance the range and validity of alternatives and to improve the processes of choice."[1]

2. Institute programs should be directed to the specific purposes and needs of the client group as they are agreed upon by consultant and client. They should be designed to include only those processes and techniques appropriate to the agreed-upon purposes and needs.

3. Both verbal and nonverbal communication techniques are appropriate in laboratory training to the extent that they meet the requirements in (2) above.

4. A central concept of laboratory method is that feelings are relevant to and may either enhance or inhibit learning. It is therefore expected that Institute programs will evoke, recognize, and focus on the emotional reactions of participants as this emphasis is relevant to the specific program goals.

---

1. Schein, E. H. & Bennis, W. G., *Personal and Organizational Change Through Group Methods.* New York: Wiley, 1965.

5. Insofar as it is possible to distinguish between education and psychotherapy, NTL Institute programs are applied for educational, not psychotherapeutic purposes. The Institute does not design or conduct programs to cure or alleviate pathological, mental or emotional conditions.

6. All Institute programs should include specific provision for recognizing and dealing with possible participant emotional difficulties. In longer-term residential programs, those provisions should include (a) the designation of a qualified staff member as counselor and (b) a relationship with a local physician for consultation and referral.

7. Recognizing the importance of experimentation to the development of knowledge, NTL Institute approves of experimental approaches in laboratory training to the extent that they are consistent with the standards presented in this paper and in **Ethical Standards of Psychologists,** a publication of the American Psychological Association. (See Appendix for especially relevant passages.)

8. NTL Institute recognizes the importance of furthering participants' application of what they have learned through the laboratory. Participants should be helped to—

- conceptualize their learning
- clarify the extent to which approaches and techniques appropriate to the laboratory setting are also appropriate to daily life
- relate laboratory learning to their daily lives
- recognize the difference between participation in and preparation to conduct training laboratories (See also note, Section V.)

9. Because the success of a training or consultation program is highly related to staff effectiveness, Institute programs should have (a) staff members who accept the defined purposes and needs of the client group and the goals of the program and who can be expected to work together effectively; (b) ample opportunities to develop common staff understandings and to resolve differences which may emerge during the program.

10. NTL Institute program announcements should be guided by the standards presented in this paper and the ethical principles on misrepresentation and advertising in the **Ethical Standards of Psychologists.**

IV. SELECTION OF TRAINEES

1. Programs using laboratory method are deemed appropriate for persons of any age, occupation, or educational level, provided they are designed and conducted in keeping with the standards presented in this paper.

2. A person undergoing psychotherapy or intensive counseling should consult his therapist before enrolling in a laboratory training program.

3. Persons in the following categories should not ordinarily participate in a laboratory training program:

- Those whose participation is based primarily on the wishes or demands of another, e.g., an employer, rather than on any degree of personal motivation.
- Those whose goal in participating would be to cure or alleviate a severe mental or emotional disturbance.
- Those with a significant history of incapacitating response to interpersonal stress.

To the limited extent that personal difficulties are predictable and screening procedures make it possible, prospective participants should be screened for these conditions.

V. STANDARDS FOR TRAINERS AND CONSULTANTS

1. NTL Institute endorses the **Ethical Standards of Psychologists** of the American Psychological Association and urges its members to guide their conduct accordingly.

2. In relationships with individual clients and client groups, persons representing NTL Institute are expected to discuss candidly and fully goals, risks, limitations, and anticipated outcomes of any program under consideration.

3. NTL Institute trainers and consultants are expected to endorse the purposes and values and adhere to the standards presented in this paper.

4. NTL Institute trainers and consultants are expected to have mastered the following skills:

- Ability to conduct a small group and to provide individual consultation using the theory and techniques of laboratory method.
- Ability to articulate theory and to direct a variety of learning experiences for small and large groups and for organizations.
- Ability to recognize their own behavior styles and personal needs and to deal with them productively in the performance of their professional roles.
- Ability to recognize symptoms of serious psychological stress and to make responsible decisions when such problems arise.

5. NTL Institute trainers and consultants are expected to have a strong theoretical foundation. This ordinarily implies graduate work in a behavioral science discipline or equivalent experience in the field.

6. NTL Institute trainers and consultants are expected to complete the following training experiences:

- Participation in at least one NTL Institute basic Human Relations laboratory.
- Supervised co-training with senior staff members.
- Participation on laboratory staff with experienced trainers in programs for a variety of client groups.
- Participation in an NTL Institute or university program specifically designed to train trainers.

NOTE: Basic human relations laboratories, executive development programs, and similar beginning-level programs are designed to help participants be more effective in personal and job roles, not to become trainers. No capabilities as a T-Group trainer or consultant should be assumed as a result of participation in one or more basic laboratories or other short-term experiences.

7. NTL Institute trainers and consultants are expected to continually evaluate their own work, to seek individual growth experiences, and to contribute to the evaluation and development of the art and science of training and consultation.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING COMPETENCE

The following questions are suggested as an approach to evaluating groups or individuals offering services using laboratory method and its derivatives:

- How do the education and training of staff members compare with the standards listed in this paper?
- Are the services and programs regularly evaluated, and is evidence of such evaluations available?
- What controls and standards does the group utilize to assure adherence to ethics?
- Is the staff able and willing to articulate the rationale for the approaches and design elements it utilizes?
- Does the group have experience in working with similar clients?

Additional references related to the use of laboratory method:

Batchelder, Richard L., and Hardy, J. M. **Using Sensitivity Training and the Laboratory Method.** New York: Association Press, 1968.

Bradford, L. P., Gibb, J. R., and Benne, K. D. **T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method: Innovation in Reeducation.** New York: Wiley, 1964.

Nylen, D. J., Mitchell, J. R., and Stout, A. **Handbook of Staff Development and Human Relations Training: Material Developed for Use in Africa.** Washington, D. C.: National Training Laboratories, 1967.

Wechsler, Irving R., and Schein, Edgar M. **Issues in Training.** Washington, D. C.: National Training Laboratories, 1962.

APPENDIX

A list of principles from the **Ethical Standards of Psychologists** of the American Psychological Association considered relevant to NTL Institute trainers and consultants.

Principle 2b. COMPETENCE The psychologist recognizes the boundaries of his competence and the limitations of his techniques and does not offer services or use techniques that fail to meet professional standards established by recognized specialists in particular fields. The psychologist who engages in practice assists his client in obtaining professional help for all important aspects of his problem that fall outside the boundaries of his own competence. This principle requires that provision be made for the diagnosis and treatment of relevant medical problems.

Principle 3. MORAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS The psychologist in the practice of his profession shows sensible regard for the social codes and moral expectations of the community in which he works, recognizing that violations of accepted moral and legal standards on his part may involve his clients, students, or colleagues in damaging personal conflicts, and impugn his own name and the reputation of his profession.

Principle 4a. MISREPRESENTATION A psychologist does not claim either directly or by implication professional qualifications that exceed his actual qualifications, nor does he misrepresent his affiliation with any institution, organization, or individual, nor lead others to assume he has affiliations that he does not have. The psychologist is responsible for correcting others who misrepresent his professional qualifications or affiliations.

Principle 7. CLIENT WELFARE The psychologist respects the integrity and protects the welfare of the person or group with whom he is working.

Principle 10. ADVERTISING A psychologist who advertises or makes public announcement of his services, describes them with accuracy and dignity, adhering to professional rather than to commercial standards.

Principle 11. INTERPROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP A psychologist does not normally offer professional services to a person who is receiving psychological assistance from another professional worker except by agreement with the other worker or after the termination of the client's relationship with the other professional worker.

Casebook on Ethical Standards of Psychologists. Washington, D.C., American Psychological Association, 1967.

NTL Institute offices:

Headquarters
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

2 West Fortieth Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

20 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606

400 Lindsay Building
710 S.W. Second Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

P.O. Box 200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110

ERIC Clearinghouse
NOV 25 1970
on Adult Education